

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00425 261500Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SS-15 SP-02
PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EUR-12 NEA-10 SY-05
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S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 425
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINS, ASEC DJ
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI REPUBLIC THREAT ANALYSIS - P-3 FLIGHT
28 MARCH
REF: DJIBOUTI 422 (R 240600Z MAR 78) NOTAL

PAGE 02 RUFRSGG7000 S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 425
1. NO READILY APPARENT POLITICAL OR MILITARY THREAT EXISTS
FOR PERIOD COVERED BY NEXT P-3 FLT TO DJIBOUTI 28 MARCH 78.
POST ASSUMES THAT VARIOUS CONDITIONS RELATING TO TECHNICAL
ASPECTS HANDLING AFCT ON GROUND TRANSMITTED TO ADDRESSEES
IN DJIBOUTI 289 (R 061415Z MAR 78) PRESENT NO DIFFICULTIES
FOR OPERATION.
2. DJIBOUTI POLITICAL SCENE DOMINATED BY SHADOW PLAY BETWEEN
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PAGE 02 DJIBOU 00425 261500Z

PRESIDENT, HIS GOVERNMENT AND AHMED DINI, WHOSE RESIGNATION
ON 16 DECEMBER 1977 PRECIPITATED THE COUNTRY'S FIRST MAJOR
POLITICAL CRISIS. IN RECENT MSG, EMBASSY REPORTED MTG WITH
AFAR PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION (REFTEL) IN WHICH IT WAS
ALLEGED THAT ARREST ORDER HAD MADE ON DINI ON GROUNDS OF
SEDITION OR SIMILAR CHARGE. SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS INDICATE
THAT NO FORMAL ARREST ORDER HAS BEEN MADE, ALTHOUGH IT

APPEARS THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR MOUMIN BAHDON, A LONG-TIME OPPONENT OF AHMED DINI, AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE ISMAIL ALI YOUSSEF, WHO REPRESENTS AFARS OPPOSED TO ETHIOPIA, ARE CONSPIRING TO FORCE THE ISSUE.

3. DESPITE RUMORS THAT AHMED DINI HAS TRAVELED RECENTLY TO MOSCOW AND/OR ADEN. IT APPEARS THAT HE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY

PAGE 03 RUFRSGG7000 S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 425

ORGANIZING AFAR ELEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA. FRENCH INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATE THAT HE HAS BEEN PRESENT AT ONE OR PERHAPS TWO MEETINGS OF AFAR LIBERATION FRONT ACTIVISTS AT ASSAB, ETHIOPIA'S REMAINING RED SEA PORT. THESE SAME REPORTS STATE THAT DINI HAS RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL SUMS OF MONEY FROM ETHIOPIAN SOURCES AND THAT CUBANS ARE NOW INVOLVED IN PLANNING AHMED DINI'S NEXT MOVE, WHICH IS TO ESTABLISH A LEGAL SOCIALIST PARTY IN OPPOSITION TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN DJIBOUTI. SOME RUMORS INDICATE THAT DINI MAY NOW ATTEMPT TO RETURN FROM ETHIOPIA NEXT TUESDAY, MARCH 28. ALTHOUGH THIS ARRIVAL, IF IT TAKES PLACE AS RUMORED, WOULD TAKE PLACE A FEW HOURS PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE P-3, AMEMBASSY PERCEIVES NO THREAT TO AIRCRAFT OR CREW. IN THE EVENT THAT DINI IS RETURNED AND IS ARRESTED, A GOVERNMENT CRISIS WOULD PRECEDE ANY IMMEDIATE OUTBREAK OF TROUBLES IN THE TOWN OF DJIBOUTI. AIRPORT SECURITY CONTINUES TO BE EXERCISED BY FRENCH AIR FORCE
SECRET

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PAGE 03 DJIBOU 00425 261500Z

COMMANDO UNITS, AND NO ACTION WOULD BE CONTEMPLATED AGAINST AREA PROTECTED BY THIS ELITE UNIT.

4. LOCAL MILITARY SCENE IS DOMINATED BY EFFORTS FRENCH ARMY AND FOREIGN LEGION UNITS TO BUILD UP DEFENSIVE CAPACITIES

PAGE 04 RUFRSGG7000 S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 425

IN OLD TUNNEL FORTRESSES WHICH WERE TUNNELED INTO THE HILLS SURROUNDING DJIBOUTI CITY PRIOR TO SECOND WORLD WAR. ALTHOUGH NEED FOR THESE POSITIONS APPEARS MARGINAL AT MOMENT, THE FRENCH COMMAND IN DJIBOUTI CONTINUES TO PREPARE FOR WORST-CASE SITUATIONS AGAINST BOTH NEIGHBORS, ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA. IN FACT, ETHIOPIANS APPEAR AT PRESENT TO PRESENT LEAST THREAT TO DJIBOUTI, SINCE THEIR VICTORY IN NORTHERN OGADEN, ETHIOPIAN FORCES HAVE EMBARKED ON CAMPAIGN TO SOOTH CONCERNS ABOUT RETRIBUTION AND HAVE LARGELY DISSIPATED PANIC WHICH MIGHT PREVAILED IN DJIBOUTI HAD THIS CAMPAIGN NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED. OBVIOUSLY, ETHIOPIANS ARE EMPLOYING THIS TACTIC TO ENABLE EARLY STARTUP OF RAILWAY SERVICES BETWEEN DJIBOUTI PORT AND ADDIS ABABA. THE POSSIBILITY OF SOMALI-INSPIRED SABOTAGE ON RAILWAY WITHIN DJIBOUTI OR INSIDE ETHIOPIA IS A PROBLEM

WHICH BOTH CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS ARE ATTEMPTING TO HEAD OFF.
5. DJIBOUTI REMAINS VERY FRAGILE STATE WITH FEW RESOURCES,
ECONOMIC OR OTHERWISE. ITS SOMALIA TRIBAL POPULATION IS STILL
DECIDING WHICH WAY TO REACT TO THE COLLAPSE OF SOMALIA
IRREDENTIST DREAMS IN OGADEN. OUR POLICIES IN HORN/HAVE
FORESTALLED FULL IDENTIFICATION WITH ASPIRATIONS EITHER

PAGE 05 RUFRSGG7000 S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 425
SIDE SO FAR AS DJIBOUTI POPULATION IS CONCERNED AND WE
HAVE RESERVOIR OF BASICALLY GOOD FEELINGS ABOUT U.S. IN DJIBOUTI.
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PAGE 04 DJIBOU 00425 261500Z

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